

## Role of aaharavidhi vidhan in regulating agni: a review

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### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** The human body needs food to supply energy for all bodily functions, including development, repair, and maintenance. A balanced diet includes a variety of foods in amounts and ratios that meet the body's demands. However, one cannot get the most out of the food they eat if they are unaware of the correct dietary recommendations. Ayurveda places particular emphasis on three values that are thought to be crucial for maintaining life and health. Aahara, Nidra, and Bhramhacharya make up this significant triune. These three have been regarded as upsthambha, or the fundamentals of health and life. Aahara has been regarded as the first Traya-upsthambha, demonstrating its significance. Ayurveda in which many guidelines are given by Acharyas to modify digestion and get the maximum benefit of food that is being taken describes Ahara Vidhi.

**Materials:** The data has been collected from Classical texts.

**Discussion:** Each factor mentioned in Aaharavidhividhan has some scientific reason behind it and has got direct impact on digestion of the food as well as on the health status of the person. It is observed that improper intake of food has been directly mentioned as causative factor for diseases.

**Conclusion:** It can be concluded that Aaharavidhividhan has great effect on health on very minute level. By following these rules of Aaharavidhi vidhan many kind of diseases can be prevented through it.

**KEYWORDS:** Aahara, Trayapsthamba, Aaharavidhividhan, Agni, Jatharagni.

### INTRODUCTION:

In Ayurveda, Aahara (food) is regarded as one of the three pillars of life (Trayopastambha)<sup>[1]</sup>, essential for sustaining health, strength, and vitality. To ensure that

food supports rather than harms the body, classical Ayurvedic texts describe precise dietary guidelines known as Aaharavidhi vidhan<sup>[2]</sup>—the rules and principles for the proper intake of food. These guidelines emphasize not only what one should eat but how, when, and in what manner food should be consumed. Central to these dietary rules is the concept of Agni, often described as the body's digestive fire. Agni governs digestion, absorption, metabolism, and transformation of nutrients. Ayurveda believes that the strength of one's health is directly proportional to the strength of Agni. When Agni functions optimally, food is digested efficiently, forming high-quality tissues (dhatus) and promoting overall well-being. Conversely, impaired Agni leads to the formation of Aama (toxins)<sup>[3]</sup>, which serves as the root cause of many diseases. Aaharavidhi vidhan and Agni are deeply interconnected. The dietary rules are designed to protect, stimulate, and balance Agni. Principles such as 'Ushanam Ashniyat', 'Snigdham Ashniyat', 'Matravat Ashniyat', 'Jirne Ashniyat', 'Virya Aviruddha Ashniyat', 'Ishta Deshe Ishta Sarvopakarane', 'Na Atidrutam Ashniyat', 'Na Ati Vilambitam Ashniyat', 'Aatanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjitam' are all based on supporting the natural functioning of Agni. Thus, Aaharavidhi vidhan provides the practical framework, while Agni represents the physiological mechanism through which food is transformed into life energy. Together, they form the foundation of Ayurvedic nutritional science.

The Supremacy of Jatharagni:

अन्नस्य पक्ता सर्वेषां पक्तृणामधिपो मतः ।  
तन्मूलास्ते हि तवृद्धिक्षयवृद्धिक्षयात्मकाः  
॥39॥

तस्मात्तं विधिवद्युक्तैरन्नपानेन्धनैर्हितैः ।  
पालयेत् प्रयतस्तस्य स्थितौ ह्यायुर्बलस्थितिः  
॥40॥ च.चि.15

Among all the thirteen types of Agni (metabolic fires) in the body, Jatharagni—the one that digests food—holds the highest importance. This is because all the other Agni depend on it. They gain strength from this Jatharagni alone, and the increase or decrease of all the other metabolic fires is based on the increase or depletion of Jatharagni. Therefore, according to the principles of proper dietary regimen, one must carefully maintain Jatharagni by using wholesome and balanced food as its fuel. The equilibrium of Jatharagni in the body determines the existence of life span, strength, complexion, health, enthusiasm, growth, and radiance.

**AIM:** To study and analyze how Aaharavidhi influences Agni and its role in maintaining health and preventing disease according to ayurvedic principles.

## OBJECTIVES:

1. To explain the concept of Agni and its types
2. To explore the role of Aahara in regulating and supporting Agni
3. To correlate proper dietary practices with Agni balance and overall health

## MATERIALS AND METHOD:

- The data has been collected from Charaka samhita, Sushruta Samhita, compiled and

analysed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some conclusions.

- Research articles, publications related to Agni, Aaharavidhi vidhan, diseases caused due to agnivaishyam were scrutinized.
- E-books and other sites on the internet were also searched for relevant data.

### **OBSERVATION:**

1. Positive Impact of Proper Aaharavidhi vidhan on Agni: Those who follow classical dietary rules such as eating warm, freshly prepared food, maintaining regular meal timings, and avoiding overeating show a marked improvement in digestive strength. Enhanced Agni reflects as reduced symptoms of indigestion, bloating, and heaviness.

2. Reduction in Aama Formation: Adherence to Aaharavidhi vidhan was associated with a notable decrease in the formation of Aama (metabolic toxins). Individuals practicing mindful eating and proper food combinations experiences fewer gastrointestinal disturbances.

3. Improvement in Overall Metabolic Efficiency: Proper dietary regimen led to better absorption and assimilation of nutrients. This can be reflected in increased energy levels, improved bowel habits, and overall metabolic balance.

4. Correlation between Dietary Errors and Agnimandya: Those who frequently consumes incompatible foods (viruddhaahara), stale food, or ate at irregular timings exhibited signs of weakened Agni. Common symptoms included loss of appetite, constipation, acid imbalance, and lethargy.

5. Enhanced Psychological Well-being: Mindful eating practices, including eating in

a calm environment and focusing attention on the meal, shows improvements in mental clarity and reduced stress—indicating a psychosomatic link between Aahara and Agni.

6. The results clearly demonstrate that following Aaharavidhividhan directly enhances Agni, which in turn promotes better digestion, nutrient assimilation, metabolic health, and overall well-being. Deviations from these guidelines negatively affect Agni, leading to digestive and systemic imbalances.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- Aahara Vidhi Vidhan

Aahara Vidhi Vidhan described in our classics, which are the foundation of dietetics. This indicates the method of taking of Ahara.<sup>[4]</sup> It contains everything related to Diet, how to eat, when to eat, what to eat. These includes Ushna, Snigdha, Matravat Aahara, Aahara is consumed after the digestion of previously ingested food, Virya Aviruddha Ahara, is to be taken into Iste Dese where it provided with Ista Sarvopakarana, not to be taken speedily, not taken slowly, taken without taking with others, taken without laughing, taken with the concentration of the mind.

-Ushnam Ashniyat<sup>[5]</sup>: (Food should be warm)

The first requisite regarding prepared meal is that it should be taken Ushna (hot). By taking hot food, Vata Anulomana is achieved, pitta get stimulated and secreted, thereby, increasing Agni or power of digestion. Kapha in oral cavity, i.e. Bodhaka kapha is secreted to ensure proper taste of food. In above conditions, Agni gets activated and the digestion process completed in proper time. The whole meal should be Ushna, so that

profuse flow of saliva and gastric juices are achieved for the next food items. Hot meals help with appropriate digestion because they take longer to ingest, according to contemporary physiology. This makes it possible for the consumer to eat in sufficient amounts, which lessens the strain on the organ responsible for breaking down food. Additionally, before the meal is delivered and consumed, the chemicals in it would have been broken down during preparation; the body readily absorbs the nutrients as they diffuse into the system, improving the nutritional value. Because microorganisms find it difficult to thrive in hot food, it reduces the danger of bacterial contamination. Eating a meal hot is healthier since microorganisms die during cooking, but if food is allowed to cool, the germs will be reintroduced.

-Snigdham Ashniyat<sup>[6]</sup> : (food should be unctuous)

The meal taken should be Snigdha(unctuous), the Snigdha Ahara causes feel of proper taste, Agnideepana, facilitate early digestion, Vata Anulomana and it makes the body plump, strengthens the sense organs, increases in the brightens the complexion. According to contemporary physiology, fat is necessary for the absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K. These vitamins are well known for boosting immunity, being beneficial to skin and eyes, being antioxidants, and being crucial for the absorption of calcium, which gives bones strength. Because it lowers the risk of heart disease, HDL is crucial. Fatty acid consumption can increase metabolism. By activating PRAR-alfa and fat burning pathways via the liver, dietary fat aids in the breakdown of existing fat.

-Matravat Ashniyat<sup>[7]</sup>: (food in proper quantity)

It means eat adequate amount. The Lakshana by which a person can decide that is Matravat are, freedom from distress is in stomach, gratification of the senses, absence of any cardiac discomfort, sense of ease in the standing, sitting, lying down walking, inhaling, exhaling., talking. Easeful digestion and assimilation of food in the evening and the morning, the imparting of strength, complexion and plumpness. According to current physiology, we are unable to adequately break down food when we consume more than our stomach can handle. Additionally, we often produce extra acid, which leads to indigestion and reflux. Furthermore, the volume of food consumed may not be fully broken down by the amount of digestive enzymes generated, which increases gas production, discomfort, or bloating. According to Ayurveda, we should leave between one-third and one-quarter of our stomachs empty so that our bodies can readily digest our food.

-Jirne Ashniyat <sup>[8]</sup>: (Intake after digestion of various meal)

It means eat after digestion of the previous meals. If one takes food before the digestion of the previous food, the digestive product of the previous food i.e. undigested Aahara Rasa of food taken afterwards it provokes all the Doshas. According to modern physiology, food that is consumed after the previous meal has been completely digested, the humors have returned to their normal positions, the gastric fire is kindled, hunger is born, the channels are clear and open, the eructation from the mouth is healthy, the stomach is clear, the peristaltic movement is normal, and

the urges to evacuate flatus, urine, and feces are well attended to all serve the sole purpose of promoting life.

-Virya Aviruddham Ashniyata<sup>[9]</sup> : (In take food having no contradictory potencies)

Virya is the power of substance by which action takes place. Eat those food which are not antagonist in virya (potency)s. According to current physiology, digestion gets overwhelmed when two or more foods with various tastes, energies, and post-digestive effects are combined. This inhibits the enzyme system and causes the formation of toxins. However, if consumed separately, these meals may improve digestion, speed up digestion, and even aid in the removal or burning of pollutants.

-Iste Dese Ista Sarva Upakarnam Asniyata<sup>[10]</sup> : (Intake in proper place and with all

accessories)

Eat in congenial place provided with all the necessary appurtenances. One eating at congenial place does not get depressed in the mind depressing emotions produced in unpleasant environment. Therefore should eat in congenial place and circumstances. As per modern physiology a complex, independent nervous system called the enteric nervous system (ENS) lines the gastrointestinal tract. Dubbed “the second brain” by Dr. Michael Gershon, a researcher and physician at Columbia University Medical Center, the ENS contains many of the major neurotransmitters that are found in the brain, including serotonin, dopamine, glutamate, norepinephrine, and nitric oxide. In fact, about 95 percent of the serotonin contained in the body at any given time is in the ENS. This second brain controls our

digestion and can work both independently and in conjunction with the brain in our head. One can briefly state that there is an intimate relationship between our brain and our gut, and our digestion responds to the thoughts and emotions. When we experience a situation that we interpret as stressful, signals from the brain can alter nerve function between the stomach and esophagus, resulting in heartburn. With extreme stress, the brain sends signals to the gut immune cells that release chemicals leading to inflammation. This inflammation can then lead to malabsorption, and even food sensitivities if the stress becomes chronic. Now days we can see special dining rooms in the houses of affluent class. Everyone always tries to keep the dining place pleasant.

-Na atidrutum Ashniyat<sup>[11]</sup>: (Intake not in hurry)

Do not eat in hurry. If food is taken too hurriedly it enters into a wrong way and will not be properly placed. Food taken in hurry can obviously affect the power of digestion by increasing the vata. According to contemporary physiology, if a person eats too slowly, they will inevitably consume more until they are not satisfied. Food's temperature changes, making hot items cold. The food is not effectively digested as a result of all these circumstances. It is difficult to tell whether food tastes nice or terrible. Positive aspects of food, such as its flavor, fragrance, and appearance, always aid digestion. Salivation and digestion are encouraged when food is tasted, smelled, or seen. According to a news study accepted for publication in The Endocrine Society's Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (JCEM), eating a meal quickly, as compared to slowly, curtails the release of



hormones in the gut that induce feelings of being full. The decreased release of these hormones, can often lead to overeating.

-Na ativilambitam Ashniyat<sup>[12]</sup>: (Intake with not to slow)

Do not eat too leisurely, that food would become cold and there will be irregularity in digestion. As per modern physiology very slow eating does not give satisfaction even if he eats so much. Hence he eats more than required and this will hamper digestion.

- Ajalpana, Ahasan, Tanmana Bhunjita<sup>[12]</sup>: (Intake with concentration)

Don't talk or laugh while eating, one who talks and laughs while eating is liable to suffer the same disorders as the one who eats too hastily. In this most important one is that the food should be eaten with concentration. Talking and laughing divert the attention from the meal and the food is eaten too slowly or too hastily. According to contemporary physiology, when we talk, air must leave our lungs and travel through the trachea, voice cords, mouth, and external environment. The epiglottis, a little tongue-like blocker, blocks the trachea when food enters and the esophagus (food pipe) most of the time when air enters since the trachea and the esophagus share an entrance. The trachea needs to be open when we talk because, as we mentioned, speaking is the movement of air through the vocal cords and various parts of the mouth. But it has to be closed when we eat. Since the body "prefers" breathing over eating, attempting to accomplish both causes the trachea to open and the esophagus to close. The meal will fall directly into our lungs if it descends at this moment. A tiny amount of food is the most harmful because it can really enter the lungs and cause damage (and

possibly infection). Usually, it's not that little and becomes lodged in our lungs, causing us to cough. The body's natural reaction is to try to get it out of the way as quickly as possible. As a result, we should refrain from laughing or talking while eating.

-Aatanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjitam<sup>[13]</sup>: (Intake with self confidence)

Eat rightly, considering your constitution. These were the dietetic rules for both healthy and unhealthy persons but Sushruta has given Dwadasa Ashana Pravichrana especially for unhealthy people. These Pravicharana facilitate the use of different type of Ahara and Ahara Vidhi according to the status of health of a person but whenever a person takes food.

#### Proper Time of Meal

In classics mentioned that the proper time for giving Ahara to a person is when he gets free of stool, urine, and eructation's, and feel his body and sense organs light and free. When he gets free action of heart as well as natural courses of his bodily Vayu, when he feels hungry and has got relish for food and when his Kukshi becomes light.<sup>[14]</sup> Once food is taken, it should not be taken again before one Yama, as it infers with Raso-utpatti and creates Ama. But the food should be taken before two Yama because if person fast for more than two Yama he will experience Bala Kshaya. One who known the place, digestive power, strength and period whenever observes hungry, should give the food according to congeniality with the gap of one or two Kala (periods). After the digestion of Rasa, Dosha and Mala one should consume food without considering time. Proper belching, clarity, enthusiasm, proper evacuation of urges, lightness of body, hunger and thirst are the features of proper

digestion.<sup>[15]</sup> In seasons where the nights are lengthy, one should consume food in morning only and when days are lengthy, food should be taken in first Prahara at night and in afternoon. Seasons where days and night are of same length food should be taken at indicated time.

Ahara Vidhi for taking different types of food items

Considering the sequence of taking different food items, Acharyas were very much particular. According to them, one should first take sweet dish, then food item containing Amla Lavana, Katu and other Rasa. The sweet food item firstly would naturally go to subdue the vayu located in stomach, Amla or Lavana rasa Pradhan aahara taken in middle would rose up the Agni in Agnyasaya. While Katu rasa would tend to subdue the Kapha.<sup>[16]</sup> Item taken in the beginning of meal should be Guru, Snigdha, Madhura, food having Manda and Sthira properties like coconut, mango, and sweets. In the middle of meal, one should take Shukta etc. Amla food items at the end one should consume Laghu, Ruksha, Katu, Tikshna and food items, which are of mild laxative in nature. Saindhava lavana and Ardrika are always palatable before meal as it is Pathya aggravates Agni, increases taste of food, cleans tongue and throat.

## CONCLUSION:

The Ayurvedic science of digestion presents a highly detailed and holistic framework in which Aaharavidhi vidhan (dietary rules) and Agni (digestive fire) share a deeply interconnected relationship. Ayurveda explains that proper digestion does not depend on Agni alone; rather, it is supported by multiple Aharaparinamakar Bhavas

(digestive factors) such as food quality, quantity, eating environment, time of intake, and individual digestive capacity. The ten principles of Upayoga Samstha—which include guidelines like eating warm, fresh food, consuming meals in the right quantity, avoiding incompatible combinations, and maintaining mindful eating—are specifically designed to enhance the functioning of Agni. When these dietary rules are followed, Agni becomes stable, strong, and efficient, resulting in proper digestion, optimal nutrient absorption, and minimal formation of Aama (toxins). Conversely, deviations from Aaharavidhi vidhan lead to weakened Agni and disturbed digestion, which can become the root cause of various lifestyle and metabolic disorders.

Thus, the study clearly shows that Aaharavidhi vidhan acts as a direct regulator and protector of Agni, and the two cannot be separated when evaluating digestive health. Ayurveda provides a scientific, precise, and practical approach to digestion at a micro-level, offering solutions that are highly relevant in today's era. By adopting these principles, many modern-day digestive and systemic disorders can be prevented, reaffirming that the Ayurvedic correlation between dietetic rules and digestive fire remains timeless, logical, and profoundly effective.

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Conflict of Interest : Non	Source of funding: Nil
Cite this Article	
<p><i>Vaishali H. Shinde, Vidya R. Naik</i> <i>Role of aaharavidhi vidhan in regulating agni: a review</i></p>	
Ayurline: International Journal of Research In Indian Medicine: 2026 10(02)	